

WITH THE FARMERS

By Prof. W. F. MASSEY



Great Farms vs. Smaller Ones.

It seems to me that the best improvement of a section is not through the combination of farms into one great plantation and thus shutting out the increase of population. I believe that the Pamunkey section, for instance, offers to men of means the same opportunity that has proved so successful on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. There men have become millionaires in buying and renting farms on a strict contract as to the cultivation and with a fair rental system the tenants have made money, and the farms have been kept up and improved.

One man there founded an estate of nearly 25,000 acres in fifty-six farms, and bought them one by one from the profits of the preceding years. And the tenants never moved so long as they farm according to contract. have in many instances bought fine farms for themselves and are renting them in the same way for their improvement while they remain on a rented farm. This has come about by the fact that the system is a fair one for tenant and landlord alike, and the aim has been to keep up and improve the land by a rational system of crop rotation and the growing of legume crops. The key to the system is the fact that all the hay and roughage of all sorts grown on the farm belongs to the tenant, who owns all the stock, so long as he feeds all on the farm.

The landowner furnishes comfortable dwellings and barns and keeps them in repair, and the tenant has a permanent tenancy so long as he farms well. The system has stood the test of over thirty years, and is probably the fairest system ever devised in this country for both landowner and tenant.

Truck Farming in Cuba.
A Frederick County correspondent wants advice in regard to farming and gardening operations in Cuba. It is hard for one who has never done any farming under tropical conditions to advise correctly. He says: "We are going to use 1,500 pounds of fertilizer an acre on onions; the fertilizer being what I have advised here for onions, namely, 500 pounds acid phosphate, 100 pounds nitrate of soda, 600 pounds cotton seed meal, 400 pounds muriate of potash."

He also says that he will put in two and a half acres in tobacco seed beds and use 1,500 to 2,000 pounds of the fertilizer an acre, and sell the tobacco plants, and plant watermelons on the same land. He had better substitute the sulphate of potash for the muriate on tobacco and the watermelons, for the muriate is not a good form in which to get potash for tobacco anywhere, and after the tobacco plants are sold, an additional application should be made in the rows for watermelons. "Would it be well to make several side applications of nitrate of soda to the onions?" Doubtless this would greatly increase the vigor of the plants, but would not hasten the growth of the crop. Then, too, I would assume that humus will be as important in Cuba as here, and that the soil should have some vegetable matter returned to it in order that the heavy fertilization may be made more effective. But your practical experience under such conditions will be of more value than anything I can advise without such experience.

Consulting the Moon.
I am an old farmer and have been in this section of the State but six months, and do not believe in planting corn or other crops according to the signs of the moon. But I find there are many people here who believe they should consult the stage of the moon in all planting, and in cutting timber, etc. Please let me know what you have to say on this subject, as I want to show it to others. These old superstitions are very hard to overcome. I have never asked the moon about my "operations," and I believe that I have made as good a better crop than many who always watch the stage of the moon. The important things in farming are the proper preparation of the soil, planting the best seed and then cultivating the crop properly and keeping up an improving rotation. The feeding of the soil, the maintaining of the moisture condition by proper methods of cultivation and planting at the right time, moon or no moon, are of far more importance than watching whether the moon is increasing or diminishing. I have never consulted the moon about any farm or garden work, and never expect to do so. The men who are always consulting the moon are as a rule the poorest farmers in every section, the men who think that farming does not pay. In short, it is the ignorant and uneducated who believe these things.

Rotting Peaches.
Another Richmond business man who has some land in the country asks: "What use can I make of rotten peaches? I have no pigs to use them, and would like to know if any use can be made of them." Peaches that rot on the tree carry the bacteria that cause more rot and they should be taken out of the orchard and destroyed in some way, so that the infection will be less in the orchard. They spray the orchard regularly in the dormant season with the lime sulphur wash to prevent damage from the San Jose scale insect, and spray with Bordeaux mixture before the buds swell to prevent the rot and the leaf curl. Get all rotted fruit off the trees and out of the orchard and destroy them or bury them in the soil away from the orchard.

Resting Land.
"Will it not improve land to let it rest over one season instead of keeping it always in cultivation?" Certainly it is not best to keep land continually in cultivated state crops. But land does not get tired. It gets starved for lack of food for plants. Letting it lie over a season to grow up in weeds and grass is, of course, somewhat better than cultivating it in corn or cotton or some other hard crop all the time. But it fills the land with weed seed and gives you more work to do to keep them down the next season. The fact is that nature will not allow land to "rest" if you do not put on it something better, she covers it with weeds and grass, and the land is not resting any more than if it had peas on it that would be of far more help to the soil than the grass and weeds that nature puts there. The best way to rest land is to keep it hard at work growing between sale crops something that will feed the soil and feed stock too. A rotation of crops is not intended for

the resting of the soil, but for the accumulation of organic decay, and the increasing of the productivity of the soil through the use of the plants that got for you the nitrogen that costs so much when bought in a fertilizer. Letting a field lie out and grow weeds will give you some organic matter, but the growing of the crop of cowpeas on the land will not only give you more of this, but will also give you as much nitrogen as you would get in a ton per acre of the usual mixed fertilizer, and through the growing of the legume crops and feeding them to stock, you can do away with the purchase of nitrogen or ammonia, as the fertilizer men like to put it on the sacks, and in many soils you would need to buy no fertilizer but acid phosphate.

Fertilizers.
"Please tell me what is the best fertilizer to use on the wheat crop." No one can tell you exactly what your soil needs. You tell me nothing of your previous treatment of the soil, what its condition is, nor what sort of soil you have. Hence it would be pure quackery for me to say what fertilizer you should use. But this I know, that where a farmer has a soil, a clay loam well-drained, and hence rotation of crops and the feeding of legume forage, grow large crops of wheat and use nothing in the way of fertilizer except dissolved rock, acid phosphate. Dr. Stubbs found that in his Gloucester land, this was all the fertilizer he needed. In farming with a good rotation and with plenty of peas and clover, phosphoric acid is more generally lacking in our old cultivated lands than anything else except nitrogen, and that we can get in abundance without buying it in a fertilizer.

Farmers as a rule buy fertilizers more by the brand name than by what plant food they contain, and I have known them to discuss the merits of two brands, when they were exactly the same, things except in name. Not long ago I looked over the report of the analyses of fertilizers made by the North Carolina Agricultural Department. I found there over 130 brands of fertilizers, each with a fancy name. They were "Crop Producers," "Special for Wheat," "Special for Potatoes," and any number of brands, and every one of these brands of more than 100 names could have been taken out of the same pile, for every one of them was the same thing, and every one of them was the low grade 3-8-2 fertilizer, which takes about 750 pounds of filler to make a ton. Farmers demand a low-priced fertilizer, and the manufacturers will accommodate them when they know that a higher priced and higher grade fertilizer will furnish the plant food cheaper than the low grade.

A Good Farmer Does Not Need a Complete Fertilizer.
He does not need a fertilizer containing all three of the important elements if he farms right. He can get all the nitrogen he needs free through the legume and stock feeding. His soil may have a store of potash that is inexhaustible, and then he only needs the phosphorus, and this he can get in acid phosphate, Thomas phosphate or bone dust, and the only question is in which form will it be most economical and available.

Many suppose that the phosphoric acid in bones is of more value than that in the rock, but in fact the phosphoric acid is one and the same thing no matter from what source, and the farmer is only concerned as to its availability. Manufacturers often offer what they call bone and potash when they know there is not a bone in it, but they imagine that farmers will be attracted by the word bone, and hence they call their acid phosphate from rock, bone. And it is just as good as though it was from bones.

What the farmer needs is to study his soil and learn what he needs to buy and what he does not need, and a few simple made experiments will soon show him this. It pays to feed the wheat crop liberally with phosphoric acid, and thus also feed the clover or peas that should follow, but it does not pay to spend money in commercial fertilizers to grow corn. That can be grown more profitably and cheaply by depending on the clover for it.

Eczema in Horse.
From Essex County: "I have a fine mare which has been suffering from an eruption of some kind, with a terrible itching. She does not eat long feed heartily and occasionally bleeds at the nose." The mare evidently has eczema, and perhaps some constitutional ailment that can only be determined by an examination by a skilled veterinarian, and you should certainly have one examine her. For the skin eruption I would wash her with tar soap and rub dry and then rub in some ointment of zinc ointment. Give her four ounces of Epsom salts daily till bowels move freely. Then get saltpetre, four ounces; common salt, four ounces; sulphur, two ounces. Pulverize and mix these well, and give a heaping teaspoonful twice a day in her feed. This I have found good. But I am not a veterinarian, and you should never let a horse go long with any disease without consulting a veterinary practitioner or a country quack doctor.

Growing Hops.
"Can't hops be grown on a commercial scale in Virginia? If so, how are they planted and cultivated?" Hops will grow anywhere in Virginia, but when it comes to the production of any crop on a large scale it is found that the culture is apt to center in sections best suited to the growing of the best quality. I have grown hops in Virginia, and in North Carolina. But I do not claim to be an expert on hops, and I know that for good climate reasons the cultivation has been confined to the more northern sections, in the Lake Michigan and elsewhere in the Western Pacific Coast. Experiments made in North Carolina convinced me that there could not be any profit in hop growing there, and the fact that the commercial culture has settled in the North is evidence that the climate there is better suited to the production of the best quality of hops than in the South.

It is far better to stick to the crops that have been found best suited to our conditions than to try to grow crops that thrive better under other conditions. There is no difficulty, however, in any one growing hops enough for home use. Plant the root cuttings in good soil and give the plant something to climb on, and you can get plenty of hops year after year. In many places in Northern Maryland they have run wild, and can be found climbing over the bushes along the brooks.

MULHALL BEGINS SECOND RECITAL

Self-Confessed Lobbyist Put on Grill by House Committee.

MUCH OF STORY REPETITION

Questioned as to His Connection With Congressmen in Work for Manufacturers.

Washington, August 11.—Martin M. Mulhall began the second recital of his experiences in influencing legislation to-day before the investigators on the House side of the Capitol. The greater part of his testimony was a repetition of matter which he had already presented to the Senate committee.

After a brief general examination, in the course of which the witness objected strenuously to testifying from his recollection without the aid of the voluminous documents which he presented to the Senate committee, the House committee began the detailed probe of the Mulhall charges.

The committee plans to consider systematically the mention of members of Congress, employees of Congress and other public men referred to in the correspondence, and examined the witness relating to each individual.

Following this plan, all of the Mulhall letters relating to Representative Richard Bartholdt, of Missouri, were placed in the record to-day, and Mulhall was questioned about them. The letters related to the activity of Mulhall in securing assistance from Bartholdt in preventing a report on an eight-hour labor bill from the Labor Committee and in supporting the Littlefield anti-pollage bill which the National Association of Manufacturers favored. The letters and Mulhall's testimony told of arranging to secure the support of Bartholdt and other members for the anti-pollage bill by working to hold up in the House Judiciary Committee a bill forbidding the interstate shipment of intoxicating liquors, to which Mr. Bartholdt was opposed.

Mulhall said that through the National Council for Industrial Defense, the Citizens' Industrial Association of St. Louis was "always put in motion to assist Bartholdt in his campaigns." "He was always friendly with the organization," the witness added. "Do you think he was friendly because of his natural attitude as a lawyer and a legislator?" asked Chairman Garrett.

"He was friendly, I believed," answered Mulhall, "because of the political influence that could be brought to bear in his district."

He added, however, that he believed Mr. Bartholdt did not abandon his personal convictions to support the interests of the National Association of Manufacturers. A letter from Representative Bartholdt, earlier placed in the records, denied that the association had ever influenced his vote.

The committee to-morrow will continue the taking of any relation to men now in Congress. Representatives Burke, of Pennsylvania; Calder, of New York; Fairchild, of New York; McDermott, of Illinois; Sherkey, of Kentucky, and Webb, of North Carolina, will be taken up in order.

A. E. Marshall, of Dayton, Ohio, who wrote a letter which Martin M. Mulhall read to the Senate lobby committee, saying Governor Cox, of Ohio, when a member of Congress had been delaying the selection of a Federal building site in Dayton for personal reasons, sent a letter to the committee to-day disclaiming any reflection on Cox. John G. Swazy, of Maine, sent a letter denying having had any relation with Mulhall.

At the request of counsel for the National Association of Manufacturers, the committee subpoenaed H. E. Miles, of Racine, Ill.; H. A. Towne and W. E. Meade, of New York, to testify regarding the movement for a tariff commission.

James A. Emery, Washington representative of the manufacturers, continued his testimony.

Emery denied the organizations he represented had originated or led the movement for the workmen's compensation bill in Congress. The committee adjourned until to-morrow morning.

ACTION OF O'NEAL MOST IMPORTANT

Necessary That Senator Come Without Cloud on His Title.

[Special to The Times-Dispatch.]

Washington, August 11.—The Alabama senatorial situation, one of the most interesting to many members of Congress, including Representative J. T. Johnson, of South Carolina. Mr. Johnson looks upon the matter caused by the death of Senator J. F. Johnston as most serious, and as one which may afford Senate Republicans an opportunity to delay final passage of the tariff bill unless the situation is handled speedily.

It is the opinion of the South Carolina Representative that Governor O'Neal, of Alabama, should at once call the Legislature together. The Legislature could in three or four days pass a law authorizing the Governor to fill the vacancy by appointment until an election can be held. In this way a Senator can be sent here in a few days. He pointed out that in this way everything would be regular and the Republicans would have no opportunity to hinder or delay the tariff. If any man comes here with a cloud on his title the Republicans will spend several weeks discussing such title, thus sidetracking and delaying the tariff bill.

"Ordinarily it would be of no interest, or concern," Mr. Johnson said, "to outsiders which course the Governor of Alabama might take, but in the present situation it is a matter of national importance. There is no doubt of the Governor's power to call the Legislature in extra session. There is no doubt of the power of the Legislature to pass a law empowering the Governor to appoint a Senator until an election can be held. To attempt to appoint or to order a special election when the Legislature has not acted will result in sending a Senator here whose title will be disputed."

P. H. McG.

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